

St. Mark's Church (Episcopal)
1625 Locust Street
Philadelphia
Philadelphia County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-1093

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

ST. MARK'S CHURCH (EPISCOPAL)

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Address: 1625 Locust Street, Philadelphia, Philadelphia
County, Pennsylvania.

Present Owner: Rector, Church Wardens and Vestry of St. Mark's
Church, 1625 Locust Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Present Use: Church.

Statement of St. Mark's was among the first Episcopal churches
Significance: in the United States to be built for the specific
purpose of reviving a more Catholic form of worship;
it is an outstanding example of the "Gothic Revival"
architecture of John Notman (1810-1865) of Philadelphia.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

(Quoted material, unless otherwise noted, is from Jonathan
Fairbanks' "John Notman: Church Architect," pp. 111-133.
See "Sources of Information" for bibliographical information.)

5/3/1848 The American Fire Insurance Company grants to
the Rector, Church Wardens and Vestrymen of St.
Mark's Church a lot on the Ns of Locust St.,
62' W from the Ws of Schuylkill Seventh St.,
200' in front on Locust St. and 100' in depth
N to a 20' st. called Emerald St., for \$1 and
the payment of rent and taxes. (Part of a larger
lot which Job Bacon and Margaretta h/w granted
to said Company on 7/11/1840). (Deed; AWM-66-395)

"Schuylkill Seventh St." is now Sixteenth Street
and "Emerald St." is now St. James Street.

Monday, First meeting of Vestry.
June 28,
1847

John Notman was contracted to prepare plans for
the church, but even after these had been com-
pleted the Vestry decided, early in 1848, to
apply to the Ecclesiological Society of England
for another set of plans. These drawings, exe-
cuted by R. C. Carpenter (1812-1855), "which from
certain peculiarities it was not considered
desirable to adopt," gave way to Notman's final
plans, adopted in February 1848, which varied
only in minor details from his first plans of 1847.

April 25, Cornerstone laid on Feast Day of St. Mark's.
1848

John Gibson (Notman's brother-in-law and associate in Philadelphia) painted the interior and the Gibson firm may have produced some of the original glass. "Catanach" (Archibald Catanach, a stone mason who married John Notman's sister, Margaret). . . "built all the woodwork in St. Mark's."

1851 "Charles Lacey, stonemason of Jersey City, New Jersey, contracted to build the tower for \$12,063.92." Tower and spire finished in this year.

On 6/7/1851, after a "stone church and school" had been erected on the above prems., the Company, for \$3,000, released the above grantees of the rent due for the westernmost part of the above, 40' x 100', the lot on which the school-house stood. (Deed poll; GWC-104-12)

1884 No. 1627 Locust Street purchased and added to church buildings (later pulled down and present clergy house built . . . c. 1892-93 from the plans of Messrs. Hazelhurst and Huckel).

1886 A Caen stone altar and reredos placed in the chancel, and the sanctuary ceiling decorated in color. [There is also mention of a "reredos erected in Dr. Hoffman's time" (April 1869-June 1879)].

c. 1892 ". . . it was that the spire of the church was in a dangerous condition and that the roofs both of the church and Parish building needed re-slatting. Extensive repairs were made to both, costing some \$7,000."

1894-95 The Cloister was added to north side (mullioned windows 1908).

1900 Reference to proposed . . . "introduction of an interior roof ceiling . . . changes to south porch."

Feb. 10, Lady Chapel consecrated. (Begun in 1900 and
1902 designed by the firm of Cope and Stewardson, Architects, of Philadelphia). Mr. C. E. Kempe of London provided glass for six windows of the Chapel.

c. 1892- Extensive interior alterations included: . . .
1909 addition to organ c. 1892 "built out into the

north aisle where the S. John . . . altar now (1902) stands." Austin Organ Company of Hartford, Connecticut, contracted for new organ and . . . "organ chamber raised considerably in height and a second chamber was built over the Sacristy" (which itself had been added, being built over what had formerly been a brick piazza). The choir organ of the Lady Chapel was added c. 1902, with its case designed by Walter Cope of Cope and Stewardson and executed by Mr. John Barber of Philadelphia. The water pressure of Philadelphia was found unsatisfactory . . . "water-motors removed, electric fan motor installed under Parish House . . . conduit more than 100'" was connected for quiet operation, making the total of a Pedal-organ, Great, Choir, and two Swell-organs in separate boxes . . . "carved oak choir-stalls with Organ Gallery and Grille and the case of the Great-organ . . . designed by Mr. Henry Vaughan of Boston . . . and executed by Messrs. Irving and Casson of Boston as well as the Organ gallery (of Indiana Limestone) by Hugh Copeland and Sons of Philadelphia" and "the black wrought-iron grille above was made in Boston under Mr. Vaughan's direction" (c. 1905-06).

"In this year [1906 or 1907] a long needed improvement was made in the Church . . . built on made ground without any proper concrete foundations except for the tower . . . piers which supported the floor had gradually sunk, in some places to the depth of five inches . . . great irregularity in the tiling" (imported by S. A. Harrison, No. 146 Walnut St.) and a new foundation and fireproof floor were added "from designs of Mr. Henry Vaughan of Boston" . . . a foundation of concrete was laid, extending from three to ten feet in depth, that is, the made ground was removed until a solid foundation was reached and upon this the concrete was laid. The floor was supported by steel beams encased in concrete. Upon these beams was constructed a floor of reinforced concrete and on this blue flagstones rubbed down smooth were laid . . . The cost was some \$16,000."

"At the same time the chancel was restored . . . and instead of flags it was paved with fine marbles . . . the platform upon which the pews had rested was removed, thus lowering the pews and showing more of the columns of the arcade."

By Christmas 1907 the new Rood-beam was put in place (replaced rood screen erected in 1879) and several richly carved doors added as well as the seven lamps designed and executed by Messrs. Barkentin and Krall of Regent Street, London, placed in the Sanctuary.

In 1908 the English alabaster altar by Kempe was moved from the Lady Chapel to be replaced by a silver altar designed by Barkentin and Krall. The black wrought-iron gates between the south aisle and the Lady Chapel were designed by Walter Cope of Cope and Stewardson and executed under his supervision in Philadelphia.

1909

West doors installed.

1923

Ornamented doors (South facade) by Nicola d'Ascenzo of Philadelphia.

1945

Exterior tower and Lady Chapel refinished.

1954

Balance of exterior stonework refinished.

1957

Interior Parish House remodelled.

1958

Reroofing and removal of the last of the original ridge-tiles.

1963-64

New altar and minor interior work. Exterior repointing and repair by Adolph Christensen, 843 Cameron Street, Philadelphia, Penna.

Windows:

North aisle: Pepper Memorial window by Burleson and Grylle. Westernmost window by Hardman. Easternmost window by Messrs. Meyer Company of Munich.

Chancel:

Five-light window over altar - glass by Meyer & Co. Gospel-side window - glass by Meyer & Co. Epistle-side window - glass by Clayton & Bell of London.

South aisle:

Westernmost window of south aisle . . . "the central panel of which representing the crucifixion, was bought by Dr. Francis W. Lewis at the dissolution of a German convent, and given to S. Mark's Church. It was afterward sent" (in 1886) "to the establishment of Messrs. Meyer & Co., in Munich, and the upper and lower panels made in the same style and color. The ancient part bears the date 1592 . . ."

West facade: Great center window by Lavers, Barraud and Westlake of London. Side aisle windows by Clayton & Bell.

Clerestory windows: Windows by Lavers, Barraud and Westlake.

Cloister: Westernmost window on South side by Clayton & Bell ". . . and the pews which are of oak, are from designs furnished by the Ecclesiological Society of England when the church was built."

Sources of Information:

Primary and Unpublished Sources:

Fairbanks, Jonathan. "John Notman: Church Architect." Unpublished Master's thesis, Winterthur Program, University of Delaware; June, 1961.

Notman, John. Thirteen original architect's drawings for St. Mark's are in the collection of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania; two are in the collection of the H. P. DuPont Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

Secondary and Published Sources:

Architectural Record. June, 1904. p.520 - Screen of St. Mark's Church.

Dallett, Francis James. "John Notman, Architect," The Princeton University Library Chronicle, XX, No. 3, (Spring, 1959).

Mortimer, Rev. Alfred, D. D. St. Mark's Church, Philadelphia, and Its Lady Chapel. New York: De Vinne Press, 1909. Including 127 plates "depicting and describing treasures of Church."

Smith, Robert C.. "John Notman . . . Drawing 66," Two Centuries of Philadelphia Architectural Drawings. Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the Society of Architectural Historians, 1964. p.51, illus.66.

Van Trump, James D. "The Gothic Revival in Pittsburgh (with References to Philadelphia)," Charette (May, 1957), pp. 20-22.

White, Theo. B. (ed.). Philadelphia Architecture in the Nineteenth Century. Philadelphia: Philadelphia Art Alliance, 1953.

B. Historical Events and Persons Associated with St. Mark's:

The funeral of General George G. Meade took place in St. Mark's on Monday, November 11, 1872.

The Lady Chapel at the end of the south aisle was given to St. Mark's and dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary by Mr. Rodman Wanamaker in memory of his wife, Fernanda, who died on March 24, 1900. She is buried in a chapel crypt below a silver altar designed and executed by Messrs. Barkentin and Krall of Regent Street, London, England, and first used on Christmas 1908.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: English Gothic Revival.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Shape: Rectangular nave (east-west) of seven bays with lower side aisles (one on north and one on south); chancel to east, sacristy to north and Lady Chapel to south of crossing; cloister north outside north aisle. Tower on south gives entry through base to sixth bay west of crossing.
2. Foundations: Granite.
3. Walls: Random range ashlar of brown freestone (rough hewn) from Trenton, Newark, Little Falls and Thom's quarries (all of New Jersey); Lady Chapel - red sandstone (coursed range ashlar).
4. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Gable and shed roofs blue slate, copper ridges; gable edges metal (formerly tile).
 - b. Flashing, drains, gutters: Copper.
5. Openings:
 - a. Windows: Carved stone mullions and foliated arches; stone drip molds on foliate and carved head corbel blocks.
 - b. Doorways: Carved stone arches; carved oak doors, some decorated with wrought-iron work.

6. Nave: One story, 110' east to west; bays 30'-2" on center; steep gable roof, seven clerestory windows in north and south facades; west facade large five-light windows; small triangular window above; three-stage buttresses near each corner, nave cornice above.
7. Side aisles: One story each, 15'-2" wide, shed roof, north and south of nave; seven bays divided by two-stage buttresses to aisle cornice, window centered in each bay except where tower attached to south aisle; north aisle has cloister full length from sacristy on the east extending west to Parish House.
8. Chancel: Extends east from gable wall of nave; one story, 37' x 25', steep gable roof, quatrefoil motif cornice band; east or gable end has a pointed window with five lights; three-stage buttresses at each corner.
9. Lady Chapel: One story, 23'-6" x 39'-8"; shallow gable roof; crenelated battlements; pinnacles with crockets rise from four two-stage buttresses on each side of the chapel, set-off at window sill; all windows have two lights except northernmost window on east facade which has three lights and west facade which has four lights; peak of gable has carved figure of Madonna and Child niched into battlement.
10. Cloister: One story, 8' wide, shed roof; extends along north aisle from sacristy to Parish House; seven windows correspond to seven bays of nave and aisle plus one windowed bay west to Parish House; roof has one skylight per bay for additional light for north aisle windows.
11. Tower and Spire: 22' x 22' at base, extends from center of fifth to center of seventh bays; four stages in base tower; ornamental carved stone band above fourth stage; four-stage buttresses at corners of each face, except northeast corner, which becomes an octagonal turret above second stage, rising to five stages with pointed trefoil openings (gable drip mold above each) in each facet, capped with an octagonal roof and finial.

First stage: south facade (Locust Street entrance) great carved doorway, ornamented doors, four columns with carved capitals in each jamb; drip mold on male head corbel blocks (heads carved in "philosopher" type, bearded and balding); east and west facades; small window centered in bay.

Second stage: Large, pointed window over entrance door, drip mold above; east and west facades: small triangular window in center of bay; narrow stone course between second and third stories.

Third stage: Small ornamental trefoil window high in center of each facade.

Fourth stage: All facades have stone courses stepped back to form wide sloping belt and base for sloping sills of two large double arched louvered openings on each facade.

12. Spire: Broach spire; height with tower, 160'.

Fifth stage: Four (north, east, south, west) steep-pitched stone dormers have louvered openings and two lights with trefoiled tops and a quatrefoil in window heads.

Sixth stage: Four (northeast, southeast, southwest, northwest) stone dormers similar to fifth story but smaller, one light, louvered with pointed cusped openings.

Seventh stage: Four (north, east, south, west) small stone dormers, louvered with trefoil heads.

Peak of Spire: Surmounted by finial and St. Lawrence "cross" (grille).

13. Parish House: Irregular "L" shaped structure extending west and south of cloister; three stories; steep gable roofs intersecting right angles; small square tower 30' high and adjoining gabled wing (part of original Parish School House); Gothic Revival and Tudor.

14. Clergy House: Extends west and south of Parish House; four stories; steep gables; small chapel in fourth story; south facade on Locust Street.

15. Landscaping: Brick walks, grass on raised lot; iron picket fence painted black on limestone foundation.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Walls: Ashlar, same as exterior.

2. Columns: Carved limestone (capitals of five columns left unfinished to signify that Christ's Church is not finished on this earth).

3. Ceilings: Wooden on wooden hammer beams, except Lady Chapel, which is stone vaulted.
4. Floors: Rubbed blue flagstone aisles, 2" tongued and grooved oak under pews; marble in choir and chancel; embellished brass fittings in Lady Chapel aisle allow flagstones to lift for entrance to stone-vaulted crypt below.
5. Windows: Same as exterior.
6. Doors: Same as exterior.
7. Nave: 60' high, floor to peak of gable; seven clerestory windows north and south walls above arcade of seven arches on six columns and two half-columns between nave and side aisles; east gable wall of ashlar has large arch to chancel, small triangular vent above; carved Italian marble pulpit and chancel rails, bronze gates; rood beam in arch above with carved wooden Crucifixion flanked by carved wooden figures of the Blessed Virgin, St. John, St. Mark and St. Barnabas; eight small paired trefoil windows above inner door at west end of nave.
8. Aisles: North and south of nave, 24' floor to top of shed roof; two doorways to cloister from north aisle; arch at east end of south aisle to Lady Chapel with ornamental wrought iron double gates. Vertical oak wainscot (single bead) with top molding.
9. Chancel: East of nave, polygonal barrel ceiling (wagon ceiling) of seven cants; panels painted in gold, blue, red in decorative style set off by gold molding.

North wall: Oak choir stalls; carved oak door to sacristy; carved limestone organ gallery with wrought-iron grille in arch above.

East wall: Figures in raised canopied niches flank four-light altar window.

South wall: Choir organ case built in arch between chancel and Lady Chapel; carved choir stalls, and sedilia.
10. Lady Chapel:

North wall: Carved stone screen across arch to chancel, gilded choir organ case above.

East wall: Three window bays, two lights each, except northernmost which has three lights.

South wall: Gable end, silver altar.

West wall: Two window bays, two lights each window,
northernmost bay with arched doorway to south aisle of
nave.

Prepared by: Philadelphia Historical Commission

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